

~~X-3~~

X-9

3-1

Foreign Affairs Manual 3 FAM 690

690 PERSONAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS

691 CAREER AND RETIREMENT COUNSELING SERVICE PROGRAM (TL PER-10 11/29/84) (Revision date: 8/30/85) (State Only)

691.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Career and Retirement Counseling Service Program is to provide information and assistance to employees so they may plan and prepare for retirement from the Department of State, and to provide assistance and counseling for those involuntarily separated (other than for cause) to ease their transition from the Department into other employment.

691.2 Legal Basis

Section 706 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended (Public Law 96-465, approved October 17, 1980), and FPM Supplement 831.1, SI-4d(6) provide for the program.

691.3 Limitations

a. The Career and Retirement Counseling Service in the Office of Employee Relations, Bureau of Personnel (PER/ER/CCS), provides personal preparation and assistance in the transition from active service with the Department of State. It is not a job placement program.

b. This Program is offered only at Washington, D.C.

691.4 Program Responsibilities

a. The Office of Employee Relations (PER/ER) is responsible for administering, monitoring, and evaluating the program.

b. The Career and Retirement Counseling Service (PER/ER/CCS) is responsible for providing, through seminars, counseling sessions, and alternative career information, the necessary guidance and opportunity for self-help in the pursuit of alternatives to active service with the Department of State.

c. The Office of Supply, Transportation, and Procurement of the Bureau of Administration (A/OPR/STP) negotiates all contracts for the program as needed.

d. Career Development Officers (CDO's) in the Office of Foreign Service Career Development and Assignments (PER/FCA) and Counselors in the Office of Civil Service Career Development and Assignments (PER/CCA) advise eligible employees of the availability of the program and its conditions.

691.5 Types of Programs

The following types of programs are included in the operation of the Career and Retirement Counseling Service:

691.5-1 Retirement Planning Seminar

a. Description

The Retirement Planning Seminar is designed for those employees who are currently eligible or will be eligible within 5 years for voluntary retirement. The seminar explores the financial and other areas of popular interest associated with retirement, as well as the possibilities for further employment outside the Department.

b. Eligibility Criteria

The following employees are eligible for this seminar:

(1) All Foreign Service and Civil Service employees of the Department who are within 5 years of retirement eligibility (other than those being separated for cause) may participate on a space available basis;

(2) Retired employees may participate up to 1 year after their separation date if they have requested the program before their retirement;

(3) Priority is given to those employees facing mandatory or involuntary (except for cause) retirement or who have retired (up to 1 year after the separation date), or who have already submitted retirement papers; and

(4) Foreign Service employees from other foreign affairs agencies may be approved for participation on a space available, reimbursable basis.

c. Procedures

The Career and Retirement Counseling Service announces the seminars. Applications by memorandum or cable from employees must include name, rank, position, post or office address, office telephone number, and separation date where relevant. Supervisors will be requested to release employees to participate, in order to qualify for attendance in a duty status. Employees whose retirement is imminent may participate up to 1 year after separation, only if they have requested the program before their retirement.

d. Requirements

(1) The Career and Retirement Counseling Service maintains a regular schedule of seminars which may be adjusted to assure maximum attendance. Seminars will be scheduled at least four times a year unless there are too few applications to justify holding a particular session;

(2) The Career and Retirement Counseling Service notifies participants of acceptance into the seminar and of any changes in the seminar schedules or location; and

(3) The seminars are held only at Washington, D.C.

691.5-2 Intensive Counseling Modules

The following intensive counseling modules are included in the Career and Retirement Counseling Service Program.

a. Part-Time Job Search Module

(1) Description

This module is an intensive learning experience based on individual and group counseling. It is designed for career employees who are considering voluntary retirement from the Department of State and want to obtain other appropriate employment. It consists of three phases, as follows:

(a) Assistance in self-analysis, appraisal and resume preparation;

(b) Developing job-finding strategies; and

(c) Assistance in conducting a second career search.

Participation in this module is part-time. Participation while in pay status is limited to no more than 40 hours of counseling sessions and no more than 40 hours of duty time for job search interviews during the 6 months after beginning the program.

(2) Eligibility Criteria

All Career Foreign Service and Civil Service employees within 1 year of eligibility for voluntary retirement (other than those being separated for cause) are eligible for this module if they have previously taken the Retirement Planning Seminar. In exceptional cases, where retirement is unexpected and sudden, the Retirement Planning Seminar may be waived. Former members of the Department of State on an overseas assignment who were assigned to receive counseling in this module before they were separated from the Service, other than those separated for cause, may continue to use this program for up to 1 year after separation.

(3) Procedures

(a) Employees apply by memorandum or cable to the Career and Retirement Counseling Service for the Part-Time Job Search Module. Applications from employees must include name, rank, position, post or office address, office telephone number, earliest voluntary retirement date, and separation date where relevant. Applicants will be allowed up to 40 hours of participation in the job search counseling sessions, if applications are accompanied by their supervisor's certification of approval to participate.

(b) Up to 40 hours in a duty status for job search interviews will be allowed during the 6 months after beginning the program.

(4) Module Responsibilities

(a) The Career and Retirement Counseling Service (PER/ER/CCS) provides the counseling services; and

(b) The participant's bureau or office certifies time and attendance for program participation based on clearance from the Career and Retirement Counseling Service.

b. Full-Time Job Search Module

(1) Description

This module is an intensive learning experience based on

individual and group counseling. The module is designed for Foreign Service employees who are retired or being separated for other than cause, Junior Officers not granted tenure, and Civil Service employees notified through reduction-in-force (RIF) that they will be separated or downgraded, who want to obtain other employment. Foreign Service and Civil Service employees who are eligible for voluntary retirement and who wish to participate in the Full-Time Job Search Module must submit a retirement application and execute a "Retirement Agreement" before an employee is accepted for and participates in the Full-Time Job Search Module (See 3 FAM 691, Appendix A). Should an employee wish to withdraw a retirement application during or after participation in the Full-Time Job Search Module, the employee may do so only upon repayment of the amount of base salary for the period of participation. The module consists of three phases, as follows:

- (a) Assistance in self-analysis, appraisal, and resume preparation;
- (b) Developing job-finding strategies; and
- (c) Assistance in conducting a second career search.

Participation in this module is full-time. Participation while in pay status is limited to no more than 90 days for participants.

(2) Eligibility Criteria

All retiring career Foreign Service and Civil Service employees (other than those being separated for cause) are eligible for this module, subject to the requirements in section 691.5-2a(2). Other officers being separated are not subject to this requirement.

(3) Procedures - Involuntary Separation

Those eligible employees notified of pending separation under non-tenure, TIC or RIF rules, or relative performance are accepted into the module under the following conditions:

- (a) They must respond to an offer of participation within 60 days after receiving notice of their pending separation;
- (b) Retiring employees should have attended the Retirement Planning Seminar. Exceptions will require approval and will be granted only in unusual circumstances.

- (c) If approved to participate in the program, employees serving overseas will be reassigned to the Department by direct transfer but may begin counseling no more than 90 days before their separation date. Neither transfer allowances nor per diem are authorized for participants as additional overseas assignments are not anticipated.

The participant may continue to use the program for up to 1 year after retirement if accepted into the program before retirement.

(4) Procedures - Voluntary Retirement

Those employees eligible for voluntary retirement who execute the "Retirement Agreement" are accepted into the module under the following conditions:

- (a) Employees apply by memorandum or cable to the Career and Retirement Counseling Service for the Full-Time Job Search Module. Applications from employees must include name, rank, position, post or office address, office telephone number, retirement date, a notarized copy of the "Retirement Agreement," and approval of their supervisor must be obtained. However, denial of a request for voluntary participation in the Full-Time Job Search Module may only be made by an Assistant Secretary, Chief of Mission, or equivalent rank.

- (b) Foreign Service employees will be assigned over-complement and Civil Service employees will be detailed to the CCS office. These employees will be subject to the receipt of special assignments and/or projects during the duration of the module.

- (c) These employees are also subject to the provisions of 691.5-2b(3)(b) and 691.5-2b(3)(c).

5. Module Responsibilities

- (a) The Career and Retirement Counseling Service (PER/ER/CCS) provides the counseling services; and

- (b) The participant's bureau or office certifies time and attendance.

691.5-3 Job Bank

The career and Retirement Counseling Service will maintain a register of job opportunities, and will coordinate job opportunities with the skills of those who have registered with the Career and Retirement Counseling Service (PER/ER/CCS).

RETIREMENT AGREEMENT

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have exercised the option to enter and participate in the Department of State Full-Time Job Search Module which is described in 3 FAM 691.5-2b which I have read and understand. I further understand and accept the requirement that I submit my retirement application as a condition for participating in the program. I have done so setting my date of retirement to be _____.

I further acknowledge and accept without limitation or exception, upon entrance into the Full-Time Job Search Module, the obligation to reimburse the department the amount of base salary for the period of participation in the Full-Time Job Search Module should I voluntarily withdraw any retirement application.

I enter into this agreement of my own free will and accord and not upon any promises or assurances other than those contained in 3 FAM 691, et. seq., which I have read thoroughly.

Employee's Post, Bureau, or Office Signature of Employee

Date Typed Name of Employee

Witness: _____
 Typed Name Signature

3 FAM 691, Appendix A

(This Draft to PER/MGT, Regulations: 8/19/85)